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Miraculous may seeme to him that reades  
 So strange ensample of conception;  
 But reason teacheth that the fruitfull seades  
 Of all things living, through impression  
 Of the sunbeames in moyst complexion,  
 Doe life conceive and quickned are by kynd:

*The Faerie Queene*, Book III, Canto VI, VI-VIII.

Probably many other literary records could be found of so widespread a folk belief. Shakespeare must have been familiar with the superstition. Moreover, in folk custom and ritual the king, or ruler, was so often spoken of as the sun<sup>14</sup> that had Polonius been on the alert to receive practical advice from Hamlet, he must easily have seen the import of the warning.

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#### MILTON'S USE OF THE FORMS OF EPIC ADDRESS

There is a curious fact concerning Milton's use of the forms of epic address that, so far as I know, has not previously been noticed. There is a temptation to regard salutations like "Daughter of God and man, accomplished Eve," "Offspring of Heav'n and all Earth's Lord" as poetic conventionalities. But Milton's use of them is more subtle. So long as Adam and Eve are sinless in the garden, they address one another with this heroic courtesy. But the minute they taste the apple, they become plain "Adam" and "Eve" to each other, and so remain to the end of the story. The unfallen Adam can address his guilty spouse as the

Fairest of creation, last and best  
 Of all God's works,

still recognizing her as a mirror of the divine idea—to speak in Platonic terms. But after the fatal deed he says more bluntly, "Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste." The poetic effectiveness of this change can be felt at once, though the philosophical explanation of it is more difficult. Perhaps there is some Platonism implicit in it. It certainly is of a piece with the irreverent familiarity that is the first result of the knowledge that has darkened their

<sup>14</sup> *Primitive Paternity*, I, 26.

vision of one another's souls and caused them to see the body instead. The fallen angels, however, still continue to address one another in these forms of epic politeness, as they were wont to do in Heav'n, "Where honour due and reverence none neglects."

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### CHAUCEUR AND DANTE AND THEIR SCRIBES

In the fourth book and sixth chapter of Dante's *Convivio* occurs the brief parenthetical remark, after an allusion to *Voluptade*,—"non dico *Voluntade*, ma scrivola per *p*." It is not far to suggest, as indeed has been suggested, that Dante was guarding against a scribal error he had too much reason to expect, and it is noteworthy that precisely this scribal error misled a later poet into inaccuracy. Chaucer, in lines 211 ff. of the *Parlement of Foules*, wrote:

Under a tre beside a welle I say  
 Cupide our lord his arwes forge and file  
 And at his fet his bowe al redy lay,  
 And Wille his doghter tempred al this while  
 The hedes in the welle: " . . .

The daughter of Cupid was not *Voluntade*, 'Wille,' but *Voluptade*, 'Pleasure.' Chaucer must have followed a text (of Boccaccio's *Genealogia Deorum*?) in which the word *Volutade* was misread, by him or another, so as to receive the nasal mark over the *u*, hence he translated it *Wille*. Professor Skeat, adopting the isolated reading of the arbitrary Cambridge ms., prints

And wel his doghter tempred al the whyle,

but the Globe Chaucer has the text as first printed above, which is the reading of the majority of the codices. The actual occurrence, in the English poet's work, of the error warned against by Dante, is an interesting coincidence, at least.

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